

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

OF THE

Town of Hamilton,

FOR THE

Year Ending March, 1875.

SALEM:

PRINTED AT THE ESSEX COUNTY MERCURY OFFICE.

1875.

REPORT.

The School Committee present the following report of the condition and progress of our schools for the past year:—

The amount appropriated by the town, for their support, in March, 1874, was	- - -	\$1000 00
Amount received from Mass. School Fund,	- - -	233 23
Amount received from Dog Licenses,	- - -	68 36
Total	- - - - -	\$1301 59

This has been expended as follows:—

Paid to teachers,	- - - - -	\$1113 75
Paid for fuel,	- - - - -	110 50
Paid for building fires,	- - - - -	19 50—\$1243 75
Leaving balance unexpended,	- - - - -	\$ 57 84

We recommend that this be added to the usual appropriation for the next year. The reason of this unexpended balance is, that the sum received from the income of the Massachusetts School Fund was unexpectedly large, it being larger by at least one hundred dollars than in any previous year, and it was received too late to make any change in the arrangement for the continuance of the schools beyond extending the winter term one week. This increase in the amount received from the income of this fund, is in consequence of the Act of 1874, which makes a distribution more favorable to the towns of small valuation than heretofore.

The statistics of the several schools are as follows:—

NORTH SCHOOL.

Summer Term. Miss LYDIA A. DANE, Teacher. Length of term, 4 1-4 months; wages per month, \$25; whole number of scholars, 41; average attendance, 31; perfect in attendance, Flora Tuttle.

Winter Term. Mr. EVERETT H. HALE, Teacher. Length of term, 3 1-4 months; wages per month, \$53; whole number of scholars, 49; average attendance, 32; perfect in attendance, Albert Whidden.

SOUTH SCHOOL.

Miss SOPHIA F. LOVERING, teacher for the year. Wages for both terms, per month, \$36.

Summer Term. Length of term, 4 3-4 months; whole number of scholars, 34; average attendance, 25; perfect in attendance, Charles Harvey, Fannie E. Patch, Nellie M. Holmes, and Addie Dodge.

Winter Term. Length of term, 3 1-4 months; whole number of scholars, 42; average attendance, 30; perfect in attendance, Margaret Dodge, Addie Dodge, Ellen A. Knowlton, Charles Harvey, and George Porter. Carrie L. Dodge was present every day, with but two tardinesses.

WEST SCHOOL.

Summer Term. Miss SUSAN M. KIMBALL, Teacher. Length of term, 4 1-4 months; wages per month, \$25; whole number of scholars, 27; average attendance, 18; perfect in attendance, Anne P. Adams, Nellie Rogers, Elliott Lamson, A. Lincoln Dodge, and Elmer Dodge.

Winter Term. Mr. GEORGE R. DODGE, Teacher. Length of term, 3 1-4 months; wages per month, \$50; perfect in attendance, A. Lincoln Dodge. Elmer Dodge was present every day, with but two tardinesses.

EAST SCHOOL.

Summer Term. Miss LAURA S. WOODBURY, Teacher. Length of term, 4 1-4 months ; wages of teacher per month, \$25 ; whole number of scholars, 30 ; average attendance, 24 ; perfect in attendance, Hattie Ingalls, Lucretia Knowlton, Annie L. Whipple, Idella E. Knowlton, Jessie L. Doty, Nellie Ingalls, Walter W. Ingalls, and Jerry Hawkins.

Winter Term. Mr. PITTS F. HOLDEN, Teacher. Length of term, 3 1-4 months ; wages of teacher per month, \$53 ; whole number of scholars, 32 ; average attendance, 29 1-2 ; perfect in attendance, Newell Burnham and Nathaniel H. Wright.

We give the following statement of the attendance in the several schools during each term, and also at the final examination at the close of the winter term, it being the percentage of the whole number on the several registers.

	Summer Term.	Winter Term.	Examination.
East School,	88	92	90
South School,	81	71	57
North School,	77	66	53
West School,	64	73	40

By this statement, it appears that the East is the banner school in attendance, for both terms, as well as at the final examination, giving for the winter term about as good a record as could be reasonably expected, considering the severity of the season and the distance at which most of the scholars live from the school house. We urge upon this school to excel their own record during the coming year, and upon other schools the duty of coming into line with the East ; there is nothing in the circumstances of the members of the other schools which presents any excuse for their lagging behind in this respect.

There are several causes which prevent our schools from accomplishing all that we wish. One is the short time for which they are kept, compared with the length of terms

in the cities and larger towns. Another is the frequent changes in teachers, which seem unavoidable under our system. These hindrances to great success cannot be easily removed, with our present appropriation for their support, and our present plan of maintaining four ungraded schools. But with all these disadvantages, much more might be accomplished in the education of our children and youth, if all those who are of the proper age should regularly and promptly attend our schools while they are in operation.

Neglect of the means of education, as it is shown either by entire absence from school, or by the irregular attendance of those who are nominal members, exists with us to an inexcusable extent. This town, under the beneficent laws of the Commonwealth, offers freely, without money and without price, to every child within its limits, instruction in those elementary studies which lie at the foundation of human learning; it tendered to all the means of a respectable education, so that there is no excuse for any, of good health and ordinary mental ability, growing up to be illiterate men and women. To remedy this evil of neglect of school privileges in the Commonwealth, the Legislature of 1873 passed an act "concerning truant children and absentees from school." This act authorizes towns to make all needful provisions, by by-laws, to secure the attendance at school of children between the ages of seven and fifteen, and directs the School Committees to enforce such provisions. This town, however, has, as yet, taken no action on the subject.

One of the rules of the Committee requires written excuses for absence and tardiness, to be obtained from those having the charge of the scholars. This rule has been enforced by our teachers, and the responsibility of irregular attendance is thus brought home to parents and guardians. We are aware that in introducing this subject, we bring forward nothing new. We remember that it has been the burden of lamentation in many previous reports; at the same time it so diminishes the usefulness of our schools, and is so great a

hindrance to the progress that might be made, that we make no apology for once more calling attention to the subject, hoping that by the co-operation of parents, all necessity for compelling children to be educated may be avoided.

The degree of success attained by our schools during the past year has varied with the different schools.

The West School is so small in numbers that we somewhat miss the spirit and enthusiasm which would be more reasonably looked for in a fuller school. We believe that both Miss Kimball and Mr. Dodge were commendably attentive to their duties and deeply interested in the welfare of their charge. At the final examination of the winter term, the remnant that was present, eight in number, did themselves and their teacher credit by prompt and accurate recitations. We are informed that the absence of some at this examination was to be excused by sickness.

In the North School in the summer term, Miss Dane met with good success and presented her school at the close in a very satisfactory condition. In the winter Mr. Hale was faithful and conscientious in the discharge of his duties, and we have no doubt accomplished a good winter's work for the regular and diligent scholars, but the irregular attendance and the absence of many at the examination affected unfavorably the appearance of the school at that time.

The East School has made a very satisfactory record not only in attendance, as appears before, but in progress in study. The teachers have found their efforts appreciated by the pupils who have had a "mind to work." Miss Woodbury has long been known to us as an acceptable teacher, and Mr. Holden, who was a stranger, has earned a good reputation by his winter in this school.

The experience of the South School for the past year, and very noticeably its appearance at the last examination, furnished very decided testimony to the great advantage in retaining the continuous services of an able and faithful teacher.

At this examination the recitations gave evidence of exact and thorough instruction. The writing, the exercises in mental arithmetic, and the reading of the first class, were especially excellent.

In speaking of the final examinations of these schools, we are reminded, that taking the West, North and South Schools together, but fifty per cent. of those whose names are on the registers for the winter terms, put in an appearance at this examination, and as the committee rely mainly on this to make their estimate of the progress in study, it will be seen that this estimate must be based on imperfect data in the absence of so many who have been members. This is another evil which it is within the power and obligation of parents to remedy.

In the discipline of our schools there has been no important deficiency which has come to the knowledge of the committee.

The school houses are in tolerably good condition. That in the South District should be painted on the outside, the steps and platform thoroughly repaired, and the plastering inside should be whitewashed.

The East school house will require but slight outlay, unless it should be thought important to put in new desks and chairs in place of the present benches, and to paint the inside of the house; probably a desire for a neat and tasteful school room will soon demand these improvements.

The West School house is in good condition excepting that some repairs should be made in the plastering and the floor.

The house in the North District needs nothing important enough to mention. Some repairs on the fences in several districts will probably be needed.

While we thus find defects in our schools, and are aware that our educational opportunities are limited, and that even while thus limited, they are not fully improved, still we should not lose our interest in these schools or our faith that

they may accomplish much good. We find that in cities and towns where the means and appliances for education are so much more abundant than with us, that the schools are often the subject of unfavorable criticism and wrangling; and if our course of study embraces but the elementary and fundamental branches, and our mental discipline is not exacting and severe, we escape the danger that the mental and physical health of our children shall be imperilled by forced and excessive intellectual labor. Our schools in the past have no mean record. We are informed that of those who were members of the South School in the winter of 1843-44, twenty afterwards became teachers. Let us at least keep up to the standard of the past.

Trusting that these suggestions may quicken the interest of the citizens of this town in the schools which are so important to its highest interests, we submit our report.

DANIEL E. SAFFORD,
GEORGE K. KNOWLTON, } Committee.
C. G. HILL.

Hamilton, March, 1875.

